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Effective crime prevention: keeping pace with new developments

Community involvement in crime prevention

Background paper for the workshop on community involvement in crime prevention**

Summary

The present paper has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/110 of 9 December 1998 in which the Assembly endorsed the programme of work for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, including the holding of four practical-oriented workshops, one of which is on the subject of community involvement in crime prevention. The workshop on community involvement in crime prevention will present practical ways for Member States to reduce crime through investment in community crime prevention. Using information from United Nations, government and expert reports, the workshop will present the case for investing in community crime prevention and provide examples of prevention involving local government, schools, parents and citizens, police and justice agencies and the private sector. In addition, the workshop will provide an overview of the trends in government support for crime prevention and identify successful benchmarks. Much of the workshop will be devoted to case studies selected and presented in a manner that is instructive in terms of methods and techniques that are in practice and of possible use to Governments in enhancing their success with crime prevention.

The workshop will conclude with a session on the avenues of support available, presenting various anchor institutions that provide technical support, information and guides to good practice, training and exchange of expertise, as well as tools to assist the process and diagnosis of crime prevention. Discussions will focus on a mechanism for investing in effective prevention transnationally through a learning-based strategy.

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** The Secretary-General wishes to acknowledge that the workshop has been organized by the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime in Montreal.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 53/110 of 9 December 1998, the General Assembly endorsed the programme of work for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, including the holding of four workshops. One of the four workshops is to be on the subject of community involvement in crime prevention.

A. Legislative context

2. Workshops on urban policy and crime prevention and on the prevention of violent crime were held within the framework of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo from 29 April to 8 May 1995. On the basis of the discussion in those workshops, guidelines for the prevention of urban crime were prepared. Subsequently, in its resolution 1995/9 of 24 July 1995, the Economic and Social Council adopted the guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention, annexed to that resolution.

3. In the report of the Secretary-General on crime prevention (E/CN.15/1999/3, paras. 4 and 5), it is stated that the concept of crime prevention has acquired a more restricted meaning, referring to non-punitive measures only, and that it is now understood to mean the targeting of the causal factors of crime, including opportunities for the commission of crime. Crime prevention has been divided into approaches focusing on (a) potential offenders and (b) situations or potential victims.

4. In its resolution 1999/25 of 28 July 1999, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to convene an interregional expert group meeting in order to analyse possible mechanisms for applying successful crime prevention strategies that are both situational and oriented towards social development to forms of crime such as urban crime, domestic violence and juvenile crime and, where appropriate, to new and emerging forms of crime such as organized crime, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and corruption.

5. Mediation and restorative justice are among the issues that are to be discussed in the workshop on community involvement in crime prevention. In addition, the workshop is expected to discuss the following (A/CONF.187/PM.1/Add.1, para. 68):

(a) Fostering public participation in community crime prevention;

(b) Mobilizing financial support for community crime prevention;

(c) Achieving "safe streets" by means of physical design;

(d) Involving young people in civic duties;

(e) Developing mechanisms for conflict resolution and mediation;

(f) Evaluating crime prevention strategies in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and degree of displacement.

6. It is expected that the workshop will lead to several initiatives including an Internet site that will provide information on crime prevention worldwide, a digest on crime prevention in selected countries, a fact book on best practices in crime prevention throughout the world, and various technical cooperation activities, such as training courses in effective crime prevention.

B. Objectives and participants

7. The workshop on community involvement in crime prevention is to be technically oriented and to yield concrete results. It will foster community involvement in crime prevention, including mediation and restorative justice, in the framework of the rule of law and in full respect of human rights. Differences between developed and developing countries will be considered throughout.

8. The workshop will identify and discuss strategies:

(a) To share information and experiences about community involvement in crime prevention and to further develop partnerships among nations, local governments, communities, etc;

(b) To strengthen social solidarity networks in support of crime prevention efforts commensurate with States' responsibilities to serve their communities;

(c) To evaluate the effectiveness of community involvement in crime prevention strategies;

(d) To mobilize the international community to provide technical assistance and resources to requesting Governments.

9. The participants in the workshop will include government officials from ministries of justice and other public agencies, municipal leaders and managers, urban

planners, specialists in community crime prevention, experts from the private sector and representatives of relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The participants will also include police, judicial and correctional authorities, communications specialists with experience in setting up public information campaigns and various forms of community outreach programmes and urban planners and architects, especially those with expertise in creating "defensible space" and "safe streets" (A/CONF.187/PM.1/Add.1, para. 70).

10. The workshop participants will meet three times; each meeting will last three hours. At the first meeting, the participants will start with the objectives of the workshop. On the basis of information from the United Nations, government and expert reports, the workshop is expected to present the case for investing in community crime prevention and provide examples of crime prevention initiatives involving local governments, schools, parents and other citizens, and police and criminal justice agencies. In addition, it will provide an overview of the trends in national government support for crime prevention and identify the benchmarks used in successful efforts to prevent crime. Much of the first two meetings of the workshop will be devoted to case studies selected to serve as examples of how such benchmarks may be used in practice.

11. At the third meeting, there will be a presentation of various institutions that provide technical support, information and guides to good practice, training and the exchange of expertise, as well as diagnostic tools. A mechanism for investing in effective crime prevention through a learning-based strategy will be discussed.

C. Preparatory meetings

12. The African Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Kampala from 7 to 9 December 1998, the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in San José from 22 to 24 February 1999, and the Western Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Beirut from 11 to 13 November 1998, discussed the workshop, stressing the need for comprehensive measures and for trust among law enforcement, the public and different sectors. Some stressed the role of traditional values, the strengthening of good governance, the right for citizens to support and control public safety, and the need for international assistance for developing countries.

13. The Ministry of Justice of Argentina supported the planning of the workshop by acting as host to an expert group meeting held in Buenos Aires, from 8 to 10 February 1999. A number of issues relating to the workshop were discussed at the meeting, including the objectives, participants, methodology, format and follow-up.

14. The Governments of Canada, France and the Netherlands, in collaboration with the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, held a conference on the theme "Prevention of Crime: Harnessing What Works" in Montreal from 3 to 6 October 1999. The conference focused on the effectiveness of national and local crime prevention strategies, ways to foster effective community prevention in practice throughout the world and ways to pursue such goals in the context of the workshop. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has recently issued a major report on comparative analysis of crime prevention[1] and a publication entitled *100 Programs to Inspire Action across the World*.[2]

II. Reasons to invest in community crime prevention

A. The challenge of crime to communities

15. For many developed countries in Asia, western Europe and North America, the likelihood of a family being the victim of a common property crime such as burglary or car theft has decreased gradually in the last few years. Yet, owing to an extended rise in crime rates in the 1960s and 1970s, the likelihood of a family falling victim to a crime in the year 2000 is still between two and three times higher than it was in the 1960s. The likelihood of violent crime continues to increase to rates that are several times what they were in the 1960s. Violence against women and crimes committed by and against youth are matters of particular concern.

16. Even in countries where crime rates are decreasing, levels of public insecurity and fear remain high. It is well known that levels of insecurity are related to factors other than crime itself: a sense of insecurity may be exacerbated by several factors, including precarious living conditions,

rising unemployment and little hope for the future. Crime, however, remains a main source of public insecurity.

17. For many developing countries and countries with economies in transition, crime rates have escalated dramatically in recent decades. Studies show that 9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of serious violent crime are those with economies in transition. Murder rates in some cities in southern Africa and South America are 10 times or more those of developed countries in Europe. Generally, the highest rates of homicide, between 22 and 64 per 100,000 population tend to occur in cities of developing countries.[3]

18. The social consequences of crime are significant. Crime affects the poor in urban areas more frequently and more deeply than other groups of the population.[4] It leads to shattered lives for victims and has an impact on society in general, seen in the increase in measures taken to ensure private security, loss of confidence in the justice system for a large segment of society and an architecture of fear.

19. Allowing crime to go unchecked has international consequences, as it provides a breeding ground for organized criminal groups.

B. Ineffective methods and the cost of crime to communities

20. The total cost of crime to communities (in terms of criminal justice, lost property, shattered lives and private security), measured as a proportion of gross domestic product, is several times greater in developing countries than in developed countries. The effect on developing countries includes reduced economic investments, more decaying neighbourhoods and fewer government resources allotted to essential social development programmes such as education, health and programmes promoting gender and ethnic equality. Many are the very programmes that the workshop on community involvement in crime prevention will focus on when discussing ways to reduce delinquency, violence and insecurity. For example, providing emergency care to victims of violent crime diverts scarce medical resources from primary care such as vaccination.

21. The costs of the criminal justice system account for between 40 and 50 per cent of the overall cost of crime. Over the past 30 years, the criminal justice system has grown on average by 95 per cent in developing countries, 75 per cent in countries with economies in transition and 50 per cent in developed countries. In many cases, over the last three decades, the costs of the criminal justice system have grown as crime rates have grown.

22. Some of the criminal justice measures introduced in developed countries have failed to produce the results expected. In the United States of America, a report for Congress on the success of federally funded programmes aimed at reducing crime concludes that many of the programmes in that country, such as "Boot Camps", Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), "Scared straight" and extra (non-targeted) law enforcement, do not tackle causes and have not reduced crime.[5] At the same time, the report confirmed that some of the examples of community crime prevention to be discussed at the workshop has proved effective.

23. Econometric studies show that preventive actions that target known risk factors are between two and seven times less costly than incarceration.[1, 6] Yet, incarceration rates increased steeply during the 1990s. In the Russian Federation and in the United States, the rate is currently close to 700 per 100,000 people; and in South Africa, it is close to 400 per 100,000 people. The young and dispossessed account for a significant proportion of those incarcerated. The costs of imprisonment, whether in economic or social terms, are significant in both the short and long term.[7]

C. Successful preventive measures: knowledge in support of action

24. A series of major conferences[8] on urban safety culminated in 1991 with the Second International Conference on Safety, Drugs and the Prevention of Urban Crime, held in Paris from 18 to 20 November 1991. Over 1,600 participants were assembled, including mayors, councillors, police executives, social development leaders and government representatives from around the world. A seven-step action plan outlining clear targets to reduce crime, drug abuse and fear was adopted. The following are examples of targets to be achieved by 1995: (a) to double the number of countries with national crime prevention structures; (b) to double the number of cities with populations of over 250,000 with crime prevention structures; (c) to establish a way of involving the public in all crime prevention structures; (d) to use 10 per cent of all new money allocated to prevention for identifying and evaluating successful efforts; and (e) to increase significantly the resources allocated to socio-economic and urban needs, particularly the needs of alienated groups

such as young persons at risk. The first two objectives have been met but only in the period between 1995 and 1999. For example, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (England and Wales) have invested in new prevention programmes with a condition that 10 per cent be spent on evaluation. Although precise statistics are difficult to obtain, many specialists maintain that resources allocated to socio-economic and urban needs have decreased.

25. Successful crime prevention measures, or potentially successful ones, can be identified with more certainty now than they could a decade ago. Similarly, the elements needed to implement effective measures and the support mechanisms required at the national level are also known now with more accuracy. In recent years, various analyses have shown that there is a considerable degree of convergence worldwide in knowledge about effective crime prevention measures.[9]

26. In research from several sources (including reports from governmental commissions in Australia, France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom,[10] published private research,[7,11] resolutions adopted by conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations,[12] and publications issued by national crime prevention organizations)[13] a number of common factors have been identified that are associated with delinquency, violence and insecurity. There are higher levels of delinquency and violence where the following interrelated situations exist:

(a) Poverty and unemployment deriving from social exclusion, especially for youth;

(b) Dysfunctional families with uncaring and inconsistent parental attitudes, violence or parental conflict;

(c) A society that accepts or promotes a culture of violence;

(d) Discrimination and exclusion based on gender, race or other unjust grounds;

(e) Degradation of urban environments and social bonds;

(f) Inadequate surveillance of public places and property;

(g) Availability of goods that are easy to transport and sell;

(h) Presence of facilitators (such as firearms, alcohol and drugs).

27. Programmes focusing on risk factors distinguish between social development risk factors for offending and situational risk factors for victimization. Successful programmes to enhance social development for children, youth and families include:

(a) For persons up to the age of 6: home visitation to enhance parental abilities and children's social abilities and preschool programming to enhance children's social and cognitive abilities;

(b) For persons between the ages of 7 and 12: skill development and social integration for children in low-income public housing, mentoring programmes for disadvantaged children and enhancing parental abilities and children's cognitive skills;

(c) For persons between the ages of 13 and 18: programmes to enhance responsibility and provide employment assistance, incentives to complete school, training and support to find employment and functional family therapy for young offenders and their families.

28. Preventive measures targeting the risk factors mentioned above have resulted in impressive and sustained reductions in offending. Other positive effects include reduced dependency on social welfare, better school achievement and better employment conditions. In addition, such prevention programmes have shown success in reducing recidivism.

29. Similarly, studies show that actions targeting the availability of opportunities for crime help to reduce crime in public places and property crime.[1] Various situational measures tackling victimization-related risk factors have also been evaluated.

D. Cost-effectiveness of preventive measures

30. Studies conducted in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (England and Wales) and the United States, show that preventive measures are more likely to reduce crime and cost less to society than increased incarceration and increases in police budget that are not directed to crime prevention measures.[1]

31. In addition, cost-benefit studies show that preventive intervention contributes to improved wages and employment opportunities, and reduced dependence on welfare. More generally, government policies to implement and support prevention programmes directly contribute to creating more jobs, especially for youth and the long-term

unemployed. This is a situation observed in particular in France and the Netherlands and reflected in their crime prevention policies.

32. Data on successful preventive measures and their cost-effectiveness are particularly important, given (a) the levels of crime and insecurity; and (b) the growing costs of traditional criminal justice and of crime more generally.

III. Examples of community crime prevention programmes

A. Local government and cities

33. Cities have been identified as the locus of interest in community safety. If a city feels safe and is safe, people will reside there, economic enterprise will flourish and the city will be attractive. Cities are in a unique position to bring key actors together around local problems, but they often need support from other levels of government to achieve this. Action at the local level is usually the most effective means of addressing the challenges and problems. Integrating crime prevention and community safety considerations into each of the various sectors of administration also contribute to good governance.

34. In countries in western Europe and in New Zealand, municipal governments have undertaken to support a partnership process that brings together agencies concerned with diverse issues, including education, health, social services, housing and law enforcement, in order to collaborate on efforts aimed at tackling the causes of local crime problems.[2] In some cases, the process involves citizen participation and consultation and requires special efforts to deal with gender and minority issues.

35. In Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, municipal government has been at the forefront of special efforts to mobilize institutions to develop successful safer city programmes, bringing together partners such as schools and social services with civic society and community associations and the police agencies. A conference, convened by the Institute for Security Studies and entitled International Conference on Safer Communities, held in Johannesburg in October 1998, brought together nearly 60 mayors from various parts of Africa to review and compare aspects of their approaches.

36. There has been a continuing decrease in violent and property crime over the last 10 years that far exceeds national trends. Municipal and police leadership, combined with community-wide partnerships has helped to sustain the trend. In Boston, for instance, there were city-wide reductions in crime of 29 per cent between 1986 and 1996, according to the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. The achievement is in part attributable to the development of problem-solving partnerships and the implementation of measures that bring together law enforcement agencies (particularly those targeting gangs and firearms) and community agencies involved in, for example, education, counselling and job-creation programmes for youth.

B. Schools and educational programmes

37. It has become widely accepted that the most effective means of addressing violence in schools is through preventive methods. The extensive media coverage of extreme violence in some schools in the United States has increased public concern about the issue. In addition, schools are in a unique position to influence the extent to which youth are involved in violence outside of school. How different countries have responded to community concerns about violence in school can be seen in the following examples:

(a) In Norway, a national anti-bullying campaign enlisted the support of school personnel, parents, the public and school children to identify and stop bullying;

(b) In the United States, the "Quantum Opportunities Program" encouraged disadvantaged teenagers to complete school by offering after-school activities such as computer training and training in life and family skills. Hourly stipends (nominal wages) are offered to participants for their college fund account;

(c) In South Africa, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Safety and Security are working on a joint programme to address factors that predispose youth to violence before they reach school, such as disorganized parenting and a culture of violence, and factors in the school environment, such as the use of violent disciplinary measures, which is thought to encourage youth to use violence. The possible interventions include efforts involving peaceful conflict resolution aimed at reducing violence in school and providing a model for less violence at home;

(d) In Chile, high levels of violence in and around four primary schools in a disadvantaged area with many single-mother households has led to a programme (I) where committees have been established involving students, parents, teachers, administrators and local police to coordinate efforts to reduce violence and overcome problems with police; (ii) that supports teachers working in disadvantaged conditions, thus providing more resources for them to work with difficult situations; and (iii) that promotes awareness of solidarity, values of citizenship, positive leadership and proactive responses.

38. The National Strategy Information Center in Washington, D. C., has helped to coordinate and promote school-based programmes aimed at developing a law-respecting culture in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, western Sicily in Italy and the United States-Mexico border. The curriculum focuses on personal, social and ethical decision-making, the rationale for the rule of law, the temptations of crime and materialism and techniques for resisting criminality, corruption and involvement in organized crime groups.

C. Parents and citizens

39. Many of the problems of youth criminality are ascribed to problems with parenting. Many problems of property crime are ascribed to lack of surveillance of property. Crime prevention efforts are often focused, therefore, on parents and citizens. Two examples of effective prevention programmes are:

(a) In the United States, a home visitation programme for families considered at risk (owing to poverty, for example, or low school achievement) was established so that its impact on crime could be measured. For example, in Hawaii, a home visitation programme has been offered state-wide since 1985. Hawaii Healthy Start is designed to identify and assist families at risk in order to improve how they function, increase parental abilities, reduce child abuse and neglect and promote healthy child development. Unlike other programmes that limit services to early infancy, Hawaii Healthy Start offers services to children up to the age of five;

(b) In the United Kingdom (England and Wales), the Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project reduced household vulnerability to burglaries and repeat victimization through collaboration between the probation service, police and social service agencies. An analysis was undertaken to determine why the crime rates were so high, followed up by targeted measures including home security upgrading, a "cocoon" neighbourhood watch programme and a group work programme for offenders. There was a 75 per cent reduction in burglaries from 1986-1987 to 1989-1990.

D. Policing and justice

40. In many of the local government programmes in southern and western Africa, western Europe and North America, the police are a key component of the partnerships that have been created to implement prevention programmes. The police bring a knowledge of where reported crimes such as thefts and assaults are occurring and a commitment to tackle crime. In developed countries, police use mapping and other sophisticated computer-based tools to analyse data. Such analyses can be of benefit to partnerships with police, schools and social services in helping to clarify where crime occurs and how it may be linked to other factors such as housing.

41. Several countries have introduced programmes designed to encourage collaboration among authorities, community groups and other interested parties. Some examples include:

(a) In the Netherlands, the "HALT scheme" involves collaboration between police, prosecutors, municipal authorities, victims and the community to have young vandals repair damage that they have caused and to provide assistance in resolving problems with employment, housing and education that some young offenders may face;

(b) In Brazil, the Council on the Status of Women countered chronic under-reporting and police inaction on violence against women by persuading the authorities to establish all-female police stations. The female police officers attend to victims, deter male violence, refer victimized women to social and psychological support services and recommend courses to abusive male partners;

(c) In New Zealand, "family group conferences" were introduced for 10- to 16-year-old offenders to reduce pressure on the criminal justice system, shift responsibility to families and the community, empower victims and provide the opportunity for offenders to repair the harm done;

(d) In France, "*maison de justice et du droit*" provide improved access to lawyers and specialized

agencies in disadvantaged and high crime areas. They promote the resolution of petty crimes through reconciliation and mediation.

IV. National strategies to sustain effective action

A. Examples of national strategies

42. Preventive measures taken at the local level can be supported through government policies and strategies, however, they do not benefit easily from knowledge and expertise developed elsewhere, can rarely be sustained and may end up forming a series of isolated and disconnected projects. Furthermore, successful strategies are not necessarily disseminated and replicated; isolated local projects may replicate less successful measures and may be required to develop their own instruments for diagnosing situations or evaluating impact. National strategies to reduce and prevent crime vary considerably, as shown in the following examples:

(a) In 1998, as part of a highly visible programme to reduce crime, the Government of the United Kingdom allocated the equivalent of US$ 450 million (or close to $6.50 per person) over three years to implement proven crime prevention strategies in the United Kingdom. In addition, a law was passed requiring local authorities to work with police forces and other agencies as part of a stringent implementation process. They were guided by a thorough investigation of all international evidence to identify what was cost-effective. The programme targets five areas: (I) tackling the social causes of crime through long-term investment in children, families and schools; (ii) reducing opportunities for burglary and car crime; (iii) helping the police focus their efforts on reducing the pattern of repeat victimization; (iv) targeting prevention measures on crime hot spots; and (v) using more effective sentences to reduce the rate of repeated offences, particularly with drug addicts. Close to 10 per cent of the allocated funds, or $42 million, will be used to evaluate systematically the results of the programme;

(b) France has had a programme in place over the last 15 years that encourages cities to mobilize partners in combating youth delinquency, to participate in crime prevention measures and to provide access to justice and victim assistance. In 1997, the internal security council chaired by the prime minister established local security contracts as a new mechanism to create local problem-solving partnerships. The mechanism was instrumental in creating new jobs for youth: 20,000 security assistants and 15,000 social mediation agents were to be hired before the year 2000;

(c) In the Netherlands, the crime prevention strategy has been learning-based with nearly 10 per cent of funds devoted to evaluation. The Government has implemented successfully many programmes across the country. A national platform was formed to bring together the private sector, Government and experts, resulting in the development of model programmes. Recently, a strategy to improve the quality of life in major cities has been part of a broad programme. The policy to prevent youth violence follows three tracks: (I) structured national action targeting the development of delinquency among youth from ethnic minority groups; (ii) a structured programme involving youth at risk to prevent them from dropping out of school and to facilitate employment; and (iii) a structured programme to give a healthy start to children and youth;

(d) In 1998, the National Crime Prevention Centre was created in Canada to focus on safer communities by tackling the factors that lead children, youth and adults to a life of crime. The strategy, including a community mobilization fund, an investment fund and a crime prevention partnership programme involving the private sector and a public education campaign;

(e) In 1996, the Government of South Africa outlined a national crime prevention strategy and established a national crime prevention centre. The centre was responsible for the following: the coordination and integration of criminal justice coordination and leadership aimed at addressing high-priority crime problems; and research advocacy and facilitation of crime prevention programmes. Following recent elections, the Government implemented a new phase focused on the implementation of a White Paper on Safety and Security. About $8 million is to be invested in social crime prevention at the local level and combined action involving law enforcement and social prevention in nine impoverished areas with high crime levels. The strategy also includes special initiatives to mobilize local government around crime reduction and task forces working on violent motor vehicle crime, schools and violence and domestic violence;

(f) In Argentina, the Ministry of Justice announced in 1998 plans to establish an interjurisdictional council. The council is to spearhead efforts to mobilize a number of

ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health and Social Action and Employment and Social Security. The programme of the ministries is to include action against risk factors;

(g) In New Zealand, the Crime Prevention Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has a budget of US$ 4 million per year (or approximately US$ 1 per person). The goals of the Unit are to coordinate resources and actions of government departments and develop partnerships with local authorities through the mechanism of safer community councils. Since 1994, the Unit has sustained the development of over 60 safer community councils and funded crime prevention projects valued at more than $5 million.

B. Trends in national strategies

43. An examination of governmental strategies developed since the mid-1970s reveals important lessons. Such strategies often evolved from governmental commissions of inquiry into crime problems and responses to these challenges, as was the case in France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England and Wales). The commissions concluded that preventive strategies should be developed and sustained by a central government agency. The strategies generally involve the creation of:

(a) A stable and identifiable responsibility centre that has a mandate to develop and implement prevention policies in coordination with other government departments. They promote a vision for prevention, develop an action plan with targets and priorities, attempt to influence other policies that have an impact on delinquency, violence and insecurity and they attempt to foster partnerships;

(b) Strategic analysis tools to evaluate action, identify trends in crime and include related social problems and target risk factors;

(c) Resources to sustain action, demonstrate through pilot projects and promote good practice;

(d) Financial resources allocated to prevention. Resources vary among countries and within countries in terms of both specific crime prevention budgets and all expenditure aimed at reducing crime;

(e) Mobilization and standardization capabilities. Funding mechanisms such as action contracts with cities and strategies to transform attitudes and practices encourage a sense of shared responsibility.

44. Despite significant differences, national strategies do not currently regard crime reduction and enhanced social solidarity as opposing goals. One trend in such strategies that seems to be emerging is the emphasis on the complementarity of prevention and control, the inclusion of indicators of the quality of life and the promotion of social solidarity through responsibility.

45. Governmental strategies to support preventive measures are confronting similar challenges, namely:

(a) Rendering the responsible agency capable of mobilizing government departments whose policies have an impact on crime and insecurity;

(b) Achieving a better balance of types of preventive measures in order to target risk factors more effectively;

(c) Strengthening and empowering local communities around partnerships capable of rigorous action, based on a sound community safety diagnosis;

(d) Taking into account knowledge from other national experiences and adapting such knowledge to local conditions;

(e) Enhancing the research and evaluation components to develop more precise and useful knowledge of risk factors and successful actions;

(f) Comparing the cost-effectiveness of various responses to crime and insecurity and reallocating resources to more effective responses.

Most national strategies face the difficulty of establishing adequate mechanisms for circulating information and training local crime prevention coordinators and others involved in crime prevention.

V. Presentation of cases to increase success

A. Elements of a successful process

46. In addition to establishing the effectiveness of preventive measures, studies and analyses conducted by national and international organizations have identified key

elements that lead to success. Such elements are often included in government contracts or legislation for community crime prevention, based on what is often called the scanning analysis response assessment (SARA) model, a four-point process that involves:

(a) Diagnosing the situation (challenges, risk factors and existing community resources);

(b) Preparing an action plan (identifying model practices and priorities, targeting risk factors adequately);

(c) Implementing the action plan (training, partnership between various sectors, coordination);

(d) Evaluating and providing feedback (both process and impact evaluation).

B. Considerations

47. In general terms, crime prevention involves community-based action. Community in this context refers to a diverse and complex concept. The term may refer to geographical placement, such as high crime or inner city areas; it may equally refer to a more or less structured collection of individuals forming an identifiable group, such as an ethno-cultural concentration of residents in a neighbourhood. Community may also refer to the international community (e.g. interested Governments) in the case of transnational issues such as cross-border crime. Community-based action refers to structured, sometimes professional, organizations set up in communities, with a specific mandate to organize crime prevention.

48. In the context of the workshop, community involvement in crime prevention refers to agencies and organizations in communities that, traditionally, have not been involved in crime prevention, such as schools, social and health services and transportation or recreational agencies.

49. In order to inspire action worldwide, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has learned to select programmes in terms of the following:

(a) *Joint action that has reduced crime*. Short-, medium- and long-term initiatives taken by countries, cities or particular sectors (such as schools, social services and housing) have reduced the incidence of one or more specific crimes by focusing on individuals at risk (potential criminals or victims), places (public spaces, high-risk housing projects) or mechanisms (reparation, street-proofing). The evaluations conducted support the idea that duplicating such initiatives in similar conditions would lead to comparable reductions in crime or victimization. In addition, reducing crime is only one benefit of preventive action. Other benefits, such as enhanced civic vitality, increased social solidarity and improved feelings of public safety, are important but are rarely measured in typical, empirical evaluation studies. It is insufficient, however, to know which action is successful in reducing risk factors, if prevention practitioners in other areas do not have access to information about the process required;

(b) *Strategies for supporting action*. Another quality shared by the initiatives in the collection of programmes is that they examine issues to be taken into account in order to achieve the sustainable development of society, including support for families, children and teenagers; interventions to break the cycle of inter-generational and gender violence; and options that encourage individual and community responsibility;

(c) *Initiatives likely to provide a basis for action*. National crime prevention policies, regional innovations and joint action by cities are some of the methods that have made it possible to achieve safety in different communities, how the key features are focused with regard to cultures and communities and the responsibilities and scope that the players have.

C. Criteria for the selection of cases for the workshop

50. The case studies to be presented in the workshop meet the following criteria:

(a) The examples chosen represent crime problems common to many Member States, such as violence against women, young people as either offenders or victims of crime, areas with high rates of violent and property crime, lack of safety and security in areas suffering from extreme poverty and exclusion, frequently committed crimes including residential burglary and car theft, and drug-related crime;

(b) They deal with community involvement in crime prevention, involving the mobilization of citizens, community associations and public institutions (such as schools and social services) to tackle the risk factors that lead to the crime problem. Such community-based efforts must respect human rights and principles of participatory democracy and fostering sustainable civic vitality. Some cases will involve restorative justice and mediation;

(c) Ideal cases will demonstrate an integrated process and will involve partnership with a lead organization working with other community-based partners in all aspects of the diagnosis, the action plan and the evaluation, all based on thorough documentation (see para. 96 above);

(d) The cases stimulate action and focus on programmes that can be adapted and replicated in other situations and settings. Written descriptions of such programmes will be made available;

(e) They are drawn from diverse cultural and regional contexts.

D. Presentation of cases in the workshop

51. As the cases are presented, workshop participants will be asked to focus their discussion on the following concerns: (a) which new decisions and conclusions the process leads to; (b) how the process creates new conditions of mobilization and leadership; (c) which elements act as leverage points toward changes in the way business is conducted.

52. Approximately 12 case studies will be presented, each presentation lasting 20 minutes. Presentations will be done in groups of three on a given theme to illustrate a variety of approaches, followed by a comment period of 20 minutes. The chosen format is aimed at enhancing understanding of key elements, including the consideration of particular issues, such as how the dialogue on a given aspect came to be opened, new conclusions and re-designed action, leadership and sustainability.

VI. Technical assistance to foster effective crime prevention

A. Anchor institutions

53. Anchor institutions assist countries and communities in implementing effective community crime prevention by providing technical advice, information and guides to good practice, training and exchange of expertise, material for public engagement and awareness and tools for diagnosis.

54. The following agencies are working around the world to strengthen crime prevention:

(a) *International Centre for the Prevention of Crime* in Montreal acts as a resource centre for community crime prevention. Its board includes members of several of the anchor institutions below. Its core programme is oriented by government departments from Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, France, the Netherlands, South Africa, the Untied Kingdom and the United States;

(b) *European Forum for Urban Safety* in Paris brings together the experiences of over 50 European cities in crime prevention;

(c) *World Association of Major Metropolises* in Paris promotes cooperation and provides technical assistance and training, particularly through its management institute;

(d) *Asia Crime Prevention Foundation* in Tokyo fosters training, research and information exchange;

(e) *Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences* in Riyadh improves the expertise of Arab security personnel through training, graduate education, technical cooperation and consulting services.

Forums for urban safety are being established at the regional level to cover Africa, the Indian Ocean and Latin America.

55. Other agencies working within countries but able to provide assistance internationally include the following:

(a) *Crime Concern* in the United Kingdom assists national and local agencies by managing projects, assisting partnerships and agencies and running training for practitioners;

(b) *National Crime Prevention Council* in the United States promotes public engagement and assists comprehensive strategies through demonstration programmes, training and advice;

(c) *Institute for Security Studies* in South Africa assists strategies through information on best practices, manuals on guidelines and diagnostic tools such as victimization surveys.

There are also national networks of municipal leaders such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the United States Conference of Mayors and the French Forum for Urban Safety able to provide wider assistance.

56. National Governments have considerable expertise to share that is widely applicable not withstanding different administrative and cultural contexts.

B. Information and guides on good practice

57. Descriptions of successful programmes that identify various elements, such as crime problems, activities, impact, costs and partnerships, can be helpful in inspiring more community-based crime prevention because they provide models and confidence.

58. Many national agencies maintain Internet sites and clearinghouses that provide descriptions of best practices. This type of transnational cooperation fosters innovative ways of preventing crime and allows analysis and expertise from around the world to be brought together in a sector where, previously, such resources and expertise were limited by national boundaries. The BC Coalition for Safer Communities in Vancouver has launched an international crime prevention action network to provide a forum for grass-roots practitioners to exchange ideas internationally. The World Society of Victimology, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Government of the Netherlands, has established an Internet site (www.victimology.nl) to enable experts and academics to gain access to information about victims and related issues. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime maintains an Internet site (www.crime-prevention-int.org) at which it posts descriptions of programmes that are likely to inspire action, including many guides to local activity. It also makes accessible comparative analyses and results from seminars designed to foster the exchange of expertise.

C. Training programme and exchange of expertise

59. In order for crime prevention to be successful, decision makers, coordinators and practitioners must have the knowledge, understanding and skills to make the programmes happen. Few governments have developed such courses. The European Forum for Urban Safety, Crime Concern in the United Kingdom and the National Crime Prevention Council in the United States have experience with a range of training programmes for key prevention professionals. The University of West Bristol in the United Kingdom has pioneered a course that will be developed for distance learning. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has launched two programmes for the exchange of expertise between Europe and North America and another in French-speaking countries in western Africa for municipal and police leaders.

D. Tools for partnerships and diagnosis

60. Much of the challenge to the success of community crime prevention lies in assisting agencies used to working alone to work together on common crime problems and associated urban, family and cultural situations. For instance, in 1998 the law on the reduction of crime and disorder in the United Kingdom required municipal authorities and police agencies to collaborate on a safety audit, in which the decision makers in city government, schools, social services, police and so on, jointly examined information on safety and related factors in their locality.

E. Learning-based strategies

61. Over the last two decades much has been learned about the success of community crime prevention in some developed countries, particularly where there has been systematic evaluation of the results. Other developed countries, some developing countries and those countries with economies in transition are pioneering similar programmes. This is a basis for significant investment in prevention strategies, as the crime reduction programme in the United Kingdom demonstrates, where a component of the funding is dedicated to assessing success. However, since crime reduction and community safety are goals that compete for resources with other government programmes, it is important that evaluations be undertaken once the programmes are implemented successfully, and that they be compared with like programmes, that is, those thought to lead to sustainable crime reduction and community safety.

62. As in any other domain of human development (such as health, education or space exploration), for crime prevention to be successful, it must build on knowledge of what works[14] and why it works. Increasingly, a transnational learning-based strategy is being explored to make prevention more affordable, responsible and sustainable in the future.

VII. Meeting special needs of developing countries and of countries with economies in transition

63. Much of what has been stated in the present paper applies as much to developed countries as to developing ones or those with economies in transition. In many cases the latter face a challenge of a different order. For instance, there may be concomitantly higher levels of street and (low visibility) intra-familial violence, large proportions of the population that are severely disadvantaged and young (that is, in the age groups perpetrating and suffering crime), rapid migration into urban areas, lack of trust in law enforcement, inefficient justice systems, corruption, limited good governance and severe competition for scarce resources. Safety and security are basic human rights and essential to economic development, therefore it is imperative that scarce resources be invested in programmes likely to protect such rights in a responsible and sustainable way. For example, in central Asia, in areas now under shared jurisdiction, problems in transborder crime are being encountered. Preventive measures in such a case represent a challenge to local officials and to the international community, to coordinate assistance and to assist in the mobilization of resources.

64. In sum, community crime prevention must become a priority for developmental aid. Donor agencies, either individually or together, can support financially and otherwise the development of community crime prevention strategies.

Notes

[1] Daniel Stansfaçon and B. Welsh, *Crime Prevention Digest II. Comparative Analysis of Successful Community Safety* (Montreal, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 1999).

[2] Lily-Ann Gauthier, *100 Crime Prevention Programs to Inspire Action across the World* (Montreal, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 1999)

[3] Graeme Newman, ed., *Global Report on Crime and Justice* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999); K. Kangaspunta and others, *Crime and Criminal Justice Systems in Europe and North America* (Helsinki, HEUNI, 1998).

[4] [incomplete] A. Louw and others, *Crime in Johannesburg: Results of a City Victim Survey* (South Africa, Halfway House, 1998).

[5] W. Sherman and others, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising* (Washington, D.C., National Institute of Justice of the United States Department of Justice, 1997).

[6] Peter Greenwood and others, *Diverting Children from a Life of Crime: Measuring Costs and Benefits* (Santa Monica, RAND Corporation, 1996).

[7] S. R. Donziger, ed., *The Real War on Crime: The Report of the National Criminal Justice Commission* (New York, Harper, 1996).

[8] Including the Conference on the Reduction of Urban Insecurity held in 1987; the Agenda for Safer Cities: European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention held in 1989; the European Forum for Urban Safety, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the United States Conference of Mayors held in 1989 and in 1991.

[9] Extensive reviews have been conducted around the world. Some published examples include: W. Sherman and others (see note 5) in the United States; P. Goldblatt and C. Lewis, *Reducing Offending . An Assessment of Research Evidence on Ways of Dealing with Offending Behaviour* (London, Home Office, Research and Statistics Directorate, 1998) in the United Kingdom (England and Wales); from an international perspective, see D. Sansfaçon and B. Welsh, *Crime Prevention Digest II: Comparative Analysis of Successful Community Safety* (Montreal, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 1999).

[10] See, for example, National Committee on Violence (1990) in Australia; Peyrefitte (1978) and Bonnemaison commissions (Commission des maires pour la sécurité, 1982) in France; the Roper Report (Ministry of Justice, 1987) in New Zealand; and Morgan in the United Kingdom (England) (Home Office, 1991).

[11] R. Loeber and D. P. Farrington, "Never too early, never too late: risk factors and successful interventions for serious and violent juvenile offenders", *Studies on Crime and Crime Prevention*, vol. 7, No. 1 (1998), pp. 7-30; and A. J. Reiss and J. A. Roth, eds., *Understanding and Preventing Violence* (Washington, National Academy Press, 1993).

[12] See *Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, 27 August-7 September 1990, report prepared by the Secretariat* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.IV.2), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 1.

[13] See, for example, *A Practical Guide to Crime Prevention for Local Partnerships*, Crime Concern, 1993. R. Linden and Swindon, *A Safer Canaaa: Guide for Community Crime Prevention* (Ottawa, National Crime Prevention Council of Canada 1996); European Forum for Urban Security, *Urban Security Practices* (Paris, 1996).

[14] Jan Van Dijk, "Towards a research-based crime reduction policy: crime prevention an effective policy option", *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, vol. 5, No. 3 (1997), pp. 13-27.